

A Look Back - Balmoral International Group



It was Siegfried – Count of Ardennes who built a castle on a headland and start dynasty that set off great rulers in Europe. After the Middle Ages; Burgundians, Spanish, French, Austrians and Prussians all waged bloody battles to secure it.

Attacked, distraught and have rebuilt over 20 times in 400 years, it became the strongest citadel in Europe after Gibraltar, thus, it called, “Gibraltar of the North.” In 1814, it was included in the recently formed United Kingdom of the Netherlands, together with Belgium, and 25 years later present-day Luxembourg was born. But its potentially risky position between France and Germany led to the major European powers declaring the country neutral in 1867. Therefore, some of the historic walls were took down, though you can still visit the damp galleries known as the “Bock Casemates.”

Luxembourg’s impartiality was ended in 1914 when Germany invaded. It was occupied for the whole of WWI and again during WWII. After the war, Luxembourg deserted its impartial status and joined NATO and the EU. The government expands the economy, enabling the little country to survive the depression in the iron and steel industries in 1970s and became a renowned financial centre and tax haven. Now home to some key EU institutions, it entered the 21st century with one of Europe’s healthiest economies and continues to ride high.

The Grand Duchy's royal family is experiencing much the same high – Grand Duke Henri and Grand Duchess Maria Teresa, a Cuban-born commoner whom Henri met at university, came to the throne in 2000 and have brought new life to the role of the ducal family.

Culturally, things are auspicious. A lustrous new concert hall and neighbouring modern art gallery recently opened in Luxembourg City, in time to celebrate the country's 2007 stint as Cultural Capital of Europe.

Source: <http://www.balmoralinternationalgroup.org/luxembourg-look-back/#sthash.IZ2dWGBu.BB1fX1bH.dpbs>